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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LOCAL GROCER INDICTED FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE OF
FOOD STAMP BENEFITS**

SAVANNAH: Lisa Godbey Wood, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, today announced that a federal grand jury sitting in Savannah has returned a ten count indictment against **KHALID Z. SARSOOR, 40**, charging him with multiple violations of unauthorized use of food stamp benefits.

The food stamp program, administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), was established by Congress to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. The program provides benefits to low-income households, and these benefits are often awarded in the form of Electronic Benefit Transfer (“EBT”) cards. The indictment alleges that Sarsour traded cash in exchange for customers’ food stamp benefits on ten separate occasions. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Sarsour, who is the owner of Lee’s Market, located at 839 E. Boundary Street, Augusta, Georgia, purchased EBT benefits from customers by providing them with cash, though there was a discount of approximately 37% from the face value of the EBT debits.

If convicted, the defendant faces a statutory maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per count. Each count also carries a term of supervised release and a special assessment.

The investigation was conducted by Special Agent James Willis of the United States Department of Agriculture in Atlanta, Georgia.

Ms. Wood stressed that an indictment is only an accusation and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The lead prosecutor representing the government is Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen K. Marsh in Augusta.

06-05